DEMOCRATIC

GERMAN REPORT

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QUOTES TO NOTE

"Yes, I am for the atom bomb. I say it would be insanity to write off the bomb and turn back to cannon and tanks as if there were nothing else".

War Minister Franz-Josef Strauss, August 31st 1961.

"The Federal German Government will not hinder the allies if they proceed with military methods against the East. We cannot base our policy upon peace at any price."

Eugen Gerstenmaier, Chairman of the West German Parliament, August 31st 1961.

"I declare solemnly that the Federal Chancellor has, in time of crisis, command over the Wehrmacht, and I would never send German soldiers without nuclear weapons out to meet a nuclear-armed opponent."

West German Chancellor Adenauer, August 31st 1961.

"The Bundeswehr needs the most modern weapons, including atomic weapons. I would refuse to work in a cabinet which refused to arm the Bundeswehr with atomic weapons."

Paul Luecke, West German Minister of Building, August 31st 1961.

"The slogans of anti-Communism and re-armament are the right slogans. My party has given its full agreement to membership in the western community, including NATO."

Willy Brandt, Social Democratic Mayor of West Berlin, September 1st 1961.

PLAN MC 96

All restrictions on the size and armament of the West German Wehrmacht are scheduled to be cancelled soon after the West German general elections on September 17th, the East Berlin newspaper "Neues Deutschland" disclosed on September 8th.

The details for the new increase in the striking power of the West German forces, already the most powerful of all western European armies, are laid down in NATO document MC 96, which was approved by the Military Standing Committee of NATO meeting in Washington in May 1961, the newspaper reported. Chairman of the Military Standing Committee is General Adolf Heusinger, who served Hitler throughout World War Two as Chief of Operations.

At present, the size and armament of the West German forces are restricted by the Paris Agreement of 1954. Under this agreement, West Germany pledged that it would not manufacture atomic weapons, chemical weapons, biological weapons, guided missiles, large warships and bombers. The agreement has already been "modified" on numerous occasions. Details of the restrictions and subsequent modifications are given in the right hand column.

"Neues Deutschland" reported on September 8th:

"After the Military Committee of NATO had approved plan MC 96, agreement was reached between West German War Minister Strauss and US Defence Minister McNamara that details of the plan should be kept secret until after the elections to the West German Parliament. The following details of the plan have now become known:

"1. In order to give West Germany a role in NATO according with its economic strength, and with its territorial claims, all restrictions on troop strength, armament and production of war material laid down in the Paris Agreement shall be cancelled.

"2. The 12 West German army divisions allocated to NATO shall be fully established by October 1961. Six further divisions, for which staffs have already been set up, shall be formed. For this purpose the Federal Defence Council has ruled that from October 1st 1961 the period of conscription shall be extended from 12 months to 18 months. To make this possible without new legislation, 40,000 Bundeswehr soldiers due for release from service shall be retained as 'active reserve' for a period of six months.

"3. Plan MC 96 lays down that all army divisions under NATO command stationed in the operational zone shall have direct control of nuclear warheads. This means that all Bundeswehr divisions will now be given control of the nuclear warheads.

Those "Restrictions"

The Paris Agreement of October 1954, also known as the "Revised Brussels Treaty", includes the following pledge given by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer:

"The Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany declares: that the Federal Republic undertakes not to manufacture in its territory:

I. Atomic weapons.
II. Chemical weapons.
III. Biological weapons.
IV. Long-distance and guided missiles, magnetic and influence mines.
V. Warships of more than 3,000 tons displacement. Submarines of more than 350 tons displacement . . .
VI. Bomber aircraft for strategic purposes.
(British White Paper Cmd. 9304)

This pledge has been steadily whittled away over the past three years. In May 1958 NATO gave West Germany permission to make guided anti-tank missiles; in October 1959 NATO gave West Germany permission to make surface-to-air and air-to-air missiles; in May 1961 NATO authorised West Germany to build missile-packing warships twice the previously permitted size. Commenting on the October 1959 missile decision, Mr Emanuel Shinwell, former Labour Defence Minister, asked: "Is this the thin end of the wedge? How long is it going to be before NATO recommends that the Federal Government should be permitted to manufacture atomic weapons? What sort of nonsense is this?"

GDR Government Protests Kidnapping, Misuse of Corridors

The Government of the German Democratic Republic has formally protested to the western allies against the misuse of the air and land corridors connecting West Berlin and West Germany. One note, addressed to the United States alone, protested against "provocative troop movements" along the motor highway from West Germany to West Berlin; the other note, addressed to Britain, France and the United States, gave details of the cases of two children who had been kidnapped in the GDR, taken to West Berlin, and then flown out to West Germany along the air corridors.

The GDR note to the United States on troop movements, dated August 26th, stated in part:

"Sixteen years after the end of the Second World War, the time has come finally to abolish the foreign occupation regime in West Berlin; The USA, however, is taking steps with a contrary aim. On August 20th 1961 a further group of the 18th American Infantry Regiment numbering 1500 men was brought over the transit routes of the GDR to West Berlin.

"The loud publicity connected with the dispatch of this military group to West Berlin made the provocative purpose clear. There can have been no other reason for the move, since the measures taken by the Government of the GDR against the provocation-centre of West Berlin did not affect the interests of the USA in any manner. The provocative march of the US military force through the area of sovereignty of the GDR and their stationing in West Berlin obviously makes more difficult negotiations on a peaceful solution of the West Berlin question between the states concerned.

"The journey of the US military group through the German Democratic Republic, and the stationing of this group in West Berlin has no connection with the basic agreement of the Great Powers of the anti-Hitler coalition, and the agreements on the former occupation machinery in Germany based thereon. All these agreements were based upon the aim of robbing German militarism and revanchism of any chance of staging further wars. The occupation regime in West Berlin, however, serves the German militarists and revenge-seekers as a cover for the implementation of their plans. It is impossible to claim that this policy is the same policy as that laid down in the agreements of Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam, in which the peoples of the anti-Hitler coalition declared their will to resist new German militarist aggression.

"The Government of the GDR has been ready, and is ready, to adhere strictly, until the conclusion of a peace treaty, to the agreements of September 1955 on the traffic of members of the West Berlin garrisons through the GDR. (This agreement, concluded between the Soviet Union and the GDR, laid down that for the time being, the Soviet Union should continue to supervise this traffic, ed.)

"This is, however, conditional upon these lines of communication not being used for purposes completely contradictory to the agreements on post-war developments in Germany.

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic protests most sharply to the Government of the USA against such infringement of the sovereignty of the German Democratic Republic."

The GDR note on kidnapping and misuse of the air corridors gave full details of the cases of two children, a three-year-old boy and a four-month-old girl who had been kidnapped from their parents in the GDR late in July and early in August, taken to West Berlin, and then flown along the air corridor to West Germany. The note stated:

"According to available information, the two children were taken to West Germany by plane; this was a misuse of the air corridors which were installed for the supply of the garrisons of the three western powers in West Berlin."

The GDR note called upon the western powers, which at present exercise occupation functions in West Berlin, to take the necessary measures to see to it that the kidnappers, operating in West Berlin, were brought to justice, and that the children were returned to their parents.

A Letter from Schweitzer

Dr Albert Schweitzer, noted peace leader, doctor, theologian and musician, has written to Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the GDR Council of State. His letter, reprinted below, is a reply to a letter from Walter Ulbricht sent in conjunction with an honorary doctorate conferred upon Schweitzer by East Berlin's Humboldt University:

"I thank you warmly for your very friendly letter of July 20th 1961. I see by your letter that you agree with what I have said about peace and that you also look with sympathy towards the idea of reverence for life.

"I have read with great sympathy what you wrote about the plan for peace and its implementation. Let us hope that everyone who employs his efforts for peace may be given the chance to experience something of its achievement and let us also hope that the realisation prevails in the world that the existence of mankind is endangered unless peace is achieved. With best regards,

Yours faithfully,
Albert Schweitzer"

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"Quicksands of West Berlin"

Report by a Top British Journalist

(Mr William Forrest, formerly of the London "News Chronicle", now of the London "Daily Mail", has been a leading British foreign correspondent over the past decades, reporting from the hot spots of the world. Recently he has been reporting from Berlin, and on August 28th, the London "Daily Mail" published the following article. GERMAN REPORT disagrees with some of Mr Forrest's observations and conclusions: but we believe that this is such an important article that we have decided to re-print it in full, just as it appeared in the "Daily Mail".)

We've got to live with them, unless we want to die with them. So, for God's sake, let us try to understand them. Between the Great Wall of China and Ulbricht's China Wall they number 1,000,000,000. And they've got a point of view.

Nowhere better can you prove it than here in Berlin. This has always been the only chink in the Iron Curtain, and despite the Chinese Wall the chink remains.

A foreigner in West Berlin has only got to take the inter-city train or hire a self-drive car and in five minutes he is there — inside the Curtain without a visa.

Our most distinguished foreigner since the crisis broke two weeks ago was Vice-President Lyndon Johnson. He came to West Berlin, talked to West Berliners, gave them ball-point pens, and then flew back home to report on the Berlin situation.

If I were to do my Berlin reporting that way I'd be fired. And deservedly. In fact, nearly half my working hours have been spent in East Berlin.

I have been into homes over there — the spacious flats of the privileged Upper Ten, the cramped quarters of the underdogs.

I have dropped into the smart cafes in the Stalinallee. I have watched the martial parades of the Red militia. And for my sins I have listened for hours to Ulbricht's dreary harangues.

After two weeks of it, what sort of interim report can I make?

First, a word of warning. If something isn't done at once to curb the West Berliners I don't like to think what might happen before another two weeks have passed.

Don't misunderstand me. I'm not excusing the East Berliners, or rather their Communist masters. It was they who precipitated this crisis on August 13.

But whatever they do on their side of the barrier is beyond our control. We can't do anything about it.

But we can on our side. And, at the Brandenburg Gate, in the British sector, we did.

For two days a West Berlin mob massed before the Gate hurled taunts and insults at the Communist Vopos (People's Police).

On the third day, when the Vopos resorted to tear-gas and water-guns, the West Berliners were ordered back half a mile or so and have not been allowed to return.

A high British officer who was there told me: "There was only one word for it — provocation'.

And he added: "I'm not going to be dragged into World War III by a bunch of Berlin teenagers if I can help it."

But what do we find at the Friedrichstrasse crossing point, which the Americans control? After supper the other night I went along to see.

The Patton tank which had been there all day with its guns trained on "these goddam Reds" was lumbering out, to be relieved by another tank for the night watch.

The pavements on either side were chock-a-block with on-lookers and a nearby vacant bomb-site was packed with a howling mob of teenage louts pouring a stream of unprintable abuse at the Vopos over the way.

Looking on, I wondered. These young toughs, had they been born a generation sooner — wouldn't you have found them in Hitler's Brownshirt army, beating up the "dirty Jews"?

And these older people on the pavement — why, 99 p. c. of them must have voted for Hitler, and meekly accepted, if they did not actively support, a far more odious dictatorship than any the world had known before or since.

Yet these are the people whose "courage" won Lyndon Johnson's admiration, and whose lives, as he put it, "are linked with those who live in every town of Western Europe and the United States."

Well, if we're in the same boat with the West Berliners we should ask them not to rock it. Especially now, when we're shooting the rapids.

But what then? The Berlin problem would still remain.

Is there then any way out of it?

The ideal solution would, of course, be the one envisaged in 1945: a reunited Germany with Berlin again the capital.

But that, I'm afraid, is not for our lifetime — not this side of 1984. Only if neutralised and demilitarised could Germany be reunited. Would NATO agree to shed West Germany? Would the Germans, now that they are armed again, agree to disarm? Not if their past history is anything to go by.

So. Germany remains divided. Should we then just decide to end this anachronism of Berlin — this impossible Western island in a Communist sea by pulling out and abandoning it to its fate?

Of course not. We are too deeply committed. And even Kruschev doesn't ask as much.

What he calls for is a "Free City of West Berlin", demilitarised, with guaranteed rights of access to the West.

I find no one on this side of the Brandenburg Gate anxious to take him up. The "Free City" would be even more at the Communists' mercy than the occupied one is today.

Berlin as inviolable United Nations territory? Personally, I can't think of a better solution.

But again I find no enthusiasm here.

Allied officials pooh-pooh the idea and West Berliners — some of whom will not even hear of negotiations with the Communists — insist that we must "stand firm" and "not give an inch."

I could wish for stronger ground to stand firm on than the political quicksands of West Berlin.

GDR Film Men Banned from Edinburgh

Four members of the GDR's DEFA Film Studios, who were to have gone to the Edinburgh Festival in early September, were refused permission to visit Scotland by the Allied Travel Office in West Berlin, which is run by the three western powers. The four had already received visas to visit Britain but were forced to cancel their visit.

Two new anti-fascist films from the GDR, "Professor Mamlock" and "The Gleiwitz Case" were shown at the festival.

INTERNATIONAL EDITION

The New York Times.

Here are letters and excerpts from letters printed in the "New York Times" (International Edition) between August 24th and 28th. We chose them not because we agree with everything expressed in them, but because they show how commonsense on the question of West Berlin and Germany is making itself felt, even in the "Letters" column of the "New York Times".

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Your correspondent, D. P. Bravie, in his letter published in your International Edition of Aug. 18, is probably correct in asserting that the British people as a whole feel no actual hatred of the German people, but he is most certainly wrong in believing that there is unanimous support for NATO commitments on Berlin.

I have yet to meet one of my countrymen or women who is willing to risk extermination in all-out nuclear war for the sake of Herr Willy Brandt and his West Berliners, among whom are doubtless many members of the former Nazi youth organizations.

Memories are long, and our cities, including the one in which I live, still bear the scars of savage aerial attack by the nation we are now pledged to defend. Small wonder there is little enthusiasm here for a reunited Germany.

Communism will most certainly never be halted by military measures. President Kennedy has pointed the way with his foreign aid program, which deserves overwhelming support.

Mrs Elsie Triggs
Bristol, England
Aug. 21, 1961

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. . . Under the present circumstances, insistence on the maintenance of the status quo in Berlin, with the lives of all humanity possibly at stake, is not only unstatesmanlike but inconsistent. We do not, for example, accept the status quo in the satellite countries as unchangeable.

If the Germans, who a quarter of a century ago were the greatest threat to human freedom, have since become such a bulwark of human freedom that their own freedom must be defended even at the risk of the suicide of humanity, there are many ways in which this can be accomplished without merely "standing pat." Probably the best solution would be the demilitarization and neutralization of a wide area in Central Europe, including Germany and some of the satellite states, as envisaged in the Rapacki-Eden plans or as suggested in somewhat different form by James Warburg.

Another possible solution would be to make Berlin, or even only West Berlin, a free city occupied by United Nations troops. In such a case the people of West Berlin would be free as they are now. They could be just as well defended by the United Nations troops as by the troops of France, England and the United States. In neither case could they be successfully defended if the Russians launched an all-out military attack . . .

Harold W. Thatcher
Forty Fort, Pa.
Aug. 12, 1961

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In our determination to stand firm in Berlin we should make ourselves clear that we do not give blanket support to West Germany's foreign policy. We see Adenauer in his position as a defensive leader, one of our few allies with strength and determination. To the Poles and Russians, even those who do not accept Khrushchev's stand on Berlin, he is an offensive leader, determined to reassert Germany's historic domination of Eastern Europe . . .

Adenauer, in early July, 1960, made a speech widely reported in British and European papers, but receiving little play in our country, to a huge audience of refugees from East Prussia. In this speech he stated that Germany's allies must realize she would never be satisfied with less than restoration of Eastern territories rightfully hers — Pomerania, Prussia and Silesia — now under Polish administration.

Was he merely trying to win refugee votes for this fall's election, or did he mean what he said?

We don't realize how frightening German claims in Eastern Europe still are to the people who felt the blows of German imperialism or how firmly this reconciles even anti-Communist Poles to their dependence on the Soviet Union. Or how logically the United States is fitted into the picture, either as catspaw or cynical ally of the capitalists and militarists of West Germany . . .

We must recognize the justification of anti-Germanism in Europe and make sure we stand clear of this. One approach would be to have England, France and the United States issue a joint statement that they consider the Oder-Neisse frontier between Poland and East Germany as the fixed boundary of any German state.

Another is to issue no nuclear weapons to the Bundeswehr. Thirdly, to make a clear-cut statement that the defense of Berlin has nothing to do with the expansion of West Germany.

These issues appear irrevelant to Americans. But they complicate our dealings with both political leaders and public opinion of Slavic Europe.

Charles Merrill,
Boston
Aug. 11, 1961
(Former lecturer for the Austrian Fulbright program and the United States Information Service in France.)

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The platforms of all West German political parties contain two demands: Unification with present East Germany and reconquest of the "lost territories" — Silesia, Danzig, and former East Prussia.

While the first goal might be reached eventually and with peaceful means, the second one cannot possibly be realized without a major war.

While therefore some of our Allies wisely back only the German unification demand, the United States foolishly also supports Bonn's belligerent revengism.

By doing so, we unnecessarily prolong and intensify the cold war with the Soviet Union, which has reached its most dangerous point in the present Berlin crisis. I am certain Khrushchev would be less adamant were it not for his justified fear of Germany starting World War III. (It was he, after all, who solved the problem of a similarly-divided Vienna, by pulling out of Austria).

My suggestion is that American foreign policy be at last again made in Washington, instead of in Bonn and on Formosa, the two revengistic centers of the globe.

Peter Strout
Madrid
Aug. 19, 1961

With Americans through GDR (II)

By Allen Mann

On my trip with Americans through the GDR, and indeed with all visitors to the GDR, I have found it necessary to explain a whole array of abbreviations and facts of GDR life: that "VEB" means a nationally-owned factory or enterprise, for example, or that "FDJ" is the youth organisation in the GDR. I also explain that there are three types of shops here; those with a big "HO" sign are nationally-owned, those with "Konsum" signs are co-op stores and almost all the rest are privately-owned. Many of the Americans in the group were surprised to learn that about one-third of the stores are in this latter category, and all were amused to hear that nationally-owned restaurants here bear the initials "HOG".

One of the questions which often popped up regarded the church. In Leipzig some of the Americans convinced themselves that the church is not "verboten" behind the Iron Curtain by going to the regular Sunday services at worthy old Thomas Church, where Johann Sebastian Bach spent many years and is now buried. The church was damaged badly during the war but has been repaired and services were, of course, quite normal.

On trips to other towns, we saw more samples of the picturesque past — many of them war-wrecked churches and palaces which had been painstakingly restored. The tastefully baroque Zwinger Building and the Semper Gallery in Dresden, with Raphael's Sistine Madonna and many Rembrandts, Rubens, Titians and other masterpieces, were not only restored but were jammed with visitors, despite the fact that we were there on a weekday morning.

Then we saw the quaint little Elbe town of Meissen with its red roofs, dominated by the beautiful Albrechtsburg castle. We also visited the adjoining cathedral where sepulchres of past monarchs are still guarded and tourists are guided by the Church and its employees.

We also visited Torgau, further up the Elbe, and saw the spot where American and Soviet troops first met in April 1945, now marked by a little monument, surrounded by flowers and by children from a nearby summer day camp. (Indeed, groups of children and flower-beds were everywhere to be seen.) Nearby was a giant medieval castle which contained the oldest Lutheran church in the world — blessed by Martin Luther himself. Other highlights are a handsome outdoor winding staircase in stone — unique in the world — and, as a surprise for most visitors, a collection of ten monstrous brown bears roaming around in what was once the castle moat. All consumed great quantities of the big, aromatic rye-bread loaves popular in the GDR, and then begged us for hand-outs in well-behaved poses.

Another day we drove through the beautiful green hills of Thuringia and visited Weimar, where we visited two other painstakingly cared-for historical sites — the homes of Goethe and Schiller, Germany's most famous poets. Weimar, too, was good to see; it was one of the very few towns relatively undamaged by the war.

Near the same town of Weimar we also saw that other memories of the more recent past were also being kept alive, at the site of the nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald.

One part of the national monument at Buchenwald consists of buildings preserved from the old camp; the entranceway with its fateful gate, the commander's headquarters, the solitary confinement cells where many prisoners were tortured or beaten to death, and the furnaces where the prisoners' bodies were burnt. Wreaths and flowers marked the sites where famous prisoners were killed; a courageous Christian clergyman, a Social Democratic leader, and Ernst Thaelmann, the head of the German Communist Party, who was arrested by the nazis in 1933 and murdered several months before the end of the war. Other flowers mark the sites of mass killings, and a large museum shows weapons and radios used by the international underground organisation in Buchenwald, which finally liberated the camp from within a few hours before American troops arrived.

Not far from the camp site was the old quarry, where many of the prisoners were worked to death. Today there is a series of monuments here marking the mass graves, symbolising each nation whose citizens were killed here, and crowned by a large statuary group showing camp inmates and a very tall bell-tower which looks out from the mountain over miles and miles of Thuringian countryside; its bell, rung three times daily, can also be heard for miles around. A plaque inside the bell-tower covers a container with earth from all the main European concentration camps and from the villages like Lidice, Oradour and Marzabotto which were wiped out by the nazis.

This is one of the three monuments built at the sites of the concentration camps on present GDR territory. The guests from America were convinced by this monument more than anything else, perhaps, that the government of the GDR had not only broken completely with Germany's fascist past but was bitterly determined to combat fascism wherever it showed its head.

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The towns of Leipzig, Dresden, Torgau and Meissen are all in Saxony, once a proud and rather pompous little kingdom, now the main industrial centre of the CDR. Everywhere one travels there are factories, large and small, making everything from playing cards to sheet steel; fuming smokestacks are scattered all over, and factory buildings were being built or enlarged in many of the towns we passed. One American told me, "Before we came here we hardly knew that there was any industry in East Germany at all. But anyone can see that there's been an awful lot of building going on and that production is in full swing!"

The group saw several plants devoted largely to making the exports so vital for the GDR in its perennial search for raw materials, foodstuffs and consumer goods. One was the Carl Zeiss plant for cameras and optical instruments, another the 250-year-old Meissen porcelain manufactory, where skilled craftsmen make the intricately shaped and coloured plates, cups, vases and figurines known to many as Dresden chinaware.

Several of us visited a printing plant in Leipzig (for offset and rotogravure), where we had more time to talk and find out about conditions. The plant was largely wrecked by bombs during the war, and the workers had picked many of the smashed machines out of the rubble piece by piece. We were told that modernisation of the printing industry had had to wait till more important sections of the economy were re-tooled.

but now the plant possessed, along with some out-dated machines ripe for the scrap pile, quite a lot of modern, fine quality equipment made in Plauen, one of the GDR's centres for printing machinery. There was also some impressive-looking electronic equipment from Britain, but since I didn't understand its name either in German or English, I'm afraid I cannot report on its part in the printing process.

We visited the little co-op store where workers can buy snacks or groceries, we looked in at the doctor's office with its varied equipment for ray and other treatments, and also at the dentist's office, the canteen where hot lunches are served, the showers and locker rooms and the apprentices' workshops.

Then, while crossing a factory yard, we saw a group of men in uniforms — a sort of grey overall-combination. This turned out to be the factory militia group. The Americans were rather shocked to meet them at first, I think — indeed, the meeting was completely unplanned — but soon an interesting conversation developed.

These factory militia groups were started in the GDR in 1954. As one of the men said, "The government trusts us to keep watch over our own factory, preventing any attempts at sabotage or wrecking. We also have rifles, and when a government gives rifles to its workers, we think that's a good proof of whose government it really is."

"We spend about four hours a month at training," one of the other men said, and they all laughed when asked whether they were paid for these overtime hours.

"These are our factories now," an older man said. "We don't want to see them damaged or taken away by anyone, inside or outside the GDR!"

Then they asked the Americans about conditions in the U.S.A. The discussion which followed centred largely around the social security and health insurance system. The Americans learned that GDR workers pay 10% of their pay for insurance — up to a 60 marks maximum — but are then completely covered, with no additional costs; dental care, visits to or by the doctor, hospital and laboratory expenses, drugs and medicines, regular medical examinations and all-expenses-paid rest or convalescence cures at a sanatorium (with financial support for the family); all is free of charge. In addition, the money paid in covers old age pensions (at 65 for men, 60 for women) and sick pay, which grants 90% of wages for 6 weeks, 50% for 6 months and 90% indefinitely in case of accidents at work or occupational diseases.

When one of the workers asked for a comparison between their two countries, an American said: "Well, you don't have the cars or other luxuries here that we have in the U.S.A., and there's obviously lots and lots left to build. But you do have much more security in life, no nervousness about keeping your job, someone in the family getting ill, or paying the next instalment, and you are clearly going ahead at a tremendous rate."

During the trip we saw many parts of the country and had a chance to speak to groups of women, youth and other sections of the population, as well as many individuals. The visitors learnt of many of the problems faced here; they were most surprised, incidentally, to discover how West Germany and especially West Berlin had damaged the GDR economically and politically, acting as centres of economic disruption, sabotage and psychological warfare, and even of things like juvenile delinquency.

The GDR started out a ruined cripple of a country with only wrecked remains of an amputated industry. It has had the misfortune to share Germany with its exceedingly better-favoured West German competitor, which is now top dog in Europe, with openly-proclaimed intentions of swallowing the GDR, and hitherto with a highly-subsidised bridgehead in West Berlin to prepare the way.

Yet despite all the handicaps the visitors were impressed by what had been done here, all found much better conditions than they had expected, and despite shortcomings and criticisms they all overcame their first uncertain feelings about seeing Germany — at least, the anti-fascist eastern part of Germany.

The most lasting impression for many was what was being done for the children and young people in the GDR. "This is a country of the future," one of the Americans told me before leaving for home.

Sport Contacts Banned

West Germany's top sport authorities put nearly all contacts between east and west German athletes on the "verboten" list in late August. A 10-hour meeting of Olympic Committee and Athletic Association leaders decided to forbid West German athletes from playing GDR players in either West Germany or the GDR and also to forbid sport organisations from any negotiations or meetings with GDR groups. This meant a complete end to contests except for those on foreign soil, and here too West Germany has been striving to get GDR athletes barred from getting visas to NATO countries and to prevent the GDR flag from being used in other countries.

Sport experts point out that West Germany may succeed only in isolating its own players, because international athletic organisations resent the introduction of West German political axe-grinding into sport events.

Belfast Team Plays in East Berlin

Football players from Belfast's FC Linfield team came to East Berlin despite West German threats and warnings, played the GDR's "ASK Vorwaerts" team before a crowd of 20,000 on August 30th as part of the Europe Cup tournament, and made good friends with their opponents despite a 3-0 defeat. Club secretary Jack Smith of Belfast said before leaving: "Our stay here was wonderful. Your hospitality was excellent. We hope to offer you just as friendly a welcome when you come to Belfast on September 20th."

The untroubled visit and interesting game was compared in the press with the bitterness felt by both sides a year ago when North Ireland's FC Glenavon team was forced to decline an invitation to play in the GDR because of West German pressure on the British Government.

Plays by Brecht on West German Index

The plays of Bertolt Brecht, great progressive writer who died in East Berlin in 1956, have been forced off the stage in West Germany and West Berlin by the huge anti-Communist wave which has submerged these areas since the Berlin frontier measures on August 13th. The Schiller Theatre in West Berlin and theatres in Kassel, Hamburg, Ulm, Luebeck and other West German cities decided, under officially-backed pressure, to drop Brecht's plays. When the head of the West Berlin Schiller Theatre refused to bow to a defamation campaign in the West Berlin press, he was given to understand that there would be riots in his theatre if he insisted on playing Brecht.

Bertolt Brecht, whose plays and books are popular in all parts of the world, east and west, lived in East Berlin from 1949 until his death and established there his Berliner Ensemble, which still produces his plays under the guidance of his widow Helene Weigel.

Teaching Them to Think

By Alex Wedding

After the frontier to West Berlin was closed on August 13th, more than 50,000 East Berliners who had been working in West Berlin were forced to drop their jobs there. These people had taken advantage of the difference in currency between the two parts of the city and earned huge wage sums; they made use of all social benefits in East Berlin but were sorely missed in the labour supply of that part of the city. Most have now found jobs in East Berlin. The following description of the process is condensed from "Neues Deutschland" of August 27th.

Things start up busily every morning in the roomy culture hall of the Electrical Apparatus Plant in Berlin's Treptow district; people looking for work are interviewed at about ten tables by workers, managers and other factory representatives who know what jobs need filling at their own particular plants. Those looking for jobs are almost all former "border-crossers" — their clothing alone indicates that very plainly. With some, you can also see that they come from the West by the way they push forward brashly to try and get the best jobs. But many of them make the embarrassed, uncertain impression of people with a bad conscience. Some have carefully "forgotten" their work-books, showing where they were employed.

The conversations at the tables show clearly the mental and human superiority of the honest citizens of our German Democratic Republic. Quiet, calm, class-conscious but always polite, they are thinking workers who have not forgotten their skills.

People with the most varied trades and professions arrive: there are salesmen who have worked on a commission basis; an insurance agent who wants to be a cultural director in a large factory; a furrier, who had worked in a West Berlin shop run by a GDR defector; a man who wants the head bookkeeper job at the Electric Apparatus Plant; a minor city government employee, cleaning women, secretaries, engineers, toolmakers and many others. They have many worried questions about shift work, pay and old age pensions.

We cannot hire the insurance salesman as a cultural director. But everything will be done to give all of them a fitting job as quickly as possible. Workers are needed everywhere. "We know from experience," said the young woman worker who was talking with the grey-haired government employee, "that people want to stick to their trade. Work is not a punishment here, but a question of honour. A radical change in work is especially difficult for older workers. Workers are needed in almost every field in Berlin."

Properly enough, a difference is drawn between outright currency speculators and those who have worked for years and even decades in the same plant in West Berlin.

One man of about 50, with an open face and quiet nature, is a tool stockroom head who has worked in West Berlin since 1946. The complete closing off of our part of the city, the military measures to protect the move and the loss of his job have shaken him deeply. "It isn't easy to give up your work overnight when you've been in the same plant for ten years," he admits. "I've been in a union since 1926. No matter for whom I worked, I am a worker and no capitalist, even though I worked in the West... after the last war I took my rifle and smashed it to pieces. I'm alarmed at what's happening now. I have four children. I don't want any war and therefore I don't want weapons..."

The people speaking with him explained patiently that the labour of the working people of the GDR strengthens our workers' and peasants' state, and thus strengthens peace, but that those who worked in the West strengthened the West, whether they were conscious of it or not. In simple words they explained the difference between a socialist state and a capitalist state... "Our weapons are a means of protection which our enemies have forced on us. Our socialist country wants neither a cold war nor a hot war. But we are ready to defend what we have built up here with all necessary measures if we should ever be attacked."

Among the job-seekers are engineers, tool-makers, skilled craftsmen. The talks with every one of them proceed quietly and objectively.

A 20-year-old frontier-crosser in a black leather jacket comes forward with a stupidly fresh attitude. He had been working "on the other side" for just under a year. "I can hold out till Christmas without working," he says provocatively when the men at the tables suggest that he return to his old job at one of our grinding machine plants. "I can also hock my motorcycle. And I live with my parents."

"Were you born into Krupp's cradle?" The face of the young woman taking part in the talks turns red with anger. "You want to eat here with us, young man. Bread doesn't fall from heaven, it is the fruit of labour. Do you think we'll feed you and wait patiently until you're ready to join in? Watch out that you don't flop again just as you did once before with your frontier-crossing job!"

Some job-seekers have brought a friend along — they feel securer that way. They sit and wait in a rather unpleasant mood like that at the dentists until their turn arrives.

We walked through the factory and talked with some of the people who had already begun their work. A pretty young girl admits that she was ashamed to come back to her old work-bench. "I was afraid about having to face my former co-workers. Oh well, it wasn't right to work on the other side. What would have happened if everyone had done it! But the temptation to change west marks into east marks and to buy lots of nice clothes and things was too strong. Now at least I know which side I'm standing on. That's clear enough."

In the transport department we spoke with a man nearly 60 years old, who on August 12th had celebrated 30 years on the job for a West Berlin firm in Neukoelln. "And the next day it was all over," he said. "I've been working here since yesterday and last night I had my first sound night's sleep. I've never been fond of loafing. I was agreeably surprised by the reception here. Especially by the friendliness of the 'authorities'. On the other side they always looked down at you."

Since August 13th more than 300 people have been taken on at the Electric Apparatus Plant. All are glad that they are working again, although, of course, most of them would still be going to West Berlin to work and changing their money at a great profit on the phony exchange rate there if it had not been made impossible.

We overheard a few workers talking about the worst of the frontier-crossers. "They've been twisted by West Berlin," said one. "That merry-go-round over there gave them all sorts of ideas. It was high time to close the frontier. We have to stop these confused people from confusing others. We have to teach them how to think. That's a big and important job."

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By Allen Mann

Despite the present heat wave, East Berlin is definitely cooling off. The tension resulting from the radical change in the city's life is receding, hardly disturbed by occasional shouts and threats from young West Berliners who gather on their side of the dividing line. The East Berliners are busy taking stock of the changes in their lives.

One major difference is in the labour supply. In the months preceding the closing of the Berlin frontier, there was an increasing shortage of labour in East Berlin. This was not only caused by the permanent defection of those searching for a pot of gold, real or fancied, at the western end of the rainbow, though this group has received the most publicity in the newspapers of the west. Another group found much more tangible gains with far fewer risks; these were the frontier-crossers, or "Grenzgänger". Well over 50,000 people from East Berlin and the surrounding countryside went to West Berlin to work. They were not attracted so much by the "atmosphere of freedom" in West Berlin, which has been described so lyrically during the past weeks and months, but rather by the fact that they could convert part or all of their wages, paid in western marks, into eastern marks at a very advantageous rate, and thus gain incredible amounts of money. By means of some minor but judicious smuggling, they could raise their income even higher every month. This meant that highly skilled workers from East Berlin might work in West Berlin at very simple, untrained tasks and yet bring home more money to East Berlin than many a college graduate. This situation grew more and more serious.

Now this has been made impossible, and the difference is quite noticeable. The printers where GERMAN REPORT goes to press finally have a full staff of linotypists and compositors, for example.

Near where I live there is a large building site. Instead of the few little bunches of men — the picture a month ago — there are now large crews of construction workers all over the place, and new apartment buildings, a cinema theatre, a restaurant, kindergarten, nursery and laundry buildings are going up rapidly.

Of course, there is still a great shortage of manpower, but many thousands of gaps have been filled.

Here is another sidelight on the change in Berlin. East Berliners have always spent a great deal of money in West Berlin, despite a great financial disadvantage because of the phony currency exchange rate. But the attraction of the latest fashion in dresses and shoes for the women, corduroy trousers for the men, flaring petticoats for the girls and blue jeans and tiny transistor radios for the boys was very powerful, and the GDR never quite manages to keep up with the very latest fad in apparel.

Now, all this money remains in East Berlin. Its owners naturally search for things to spend it on. Since prices never go up in the GDR, there can be no inflation, but the pressure of consumer demand has been increased. In addition, the excitement caused by the events in August impelled some people to hoard certain commodities. Just as demand for all kinds of goods here seemed to be really getting out of hand, the American-run RIAS radio in West Berlin started a huge campaign saying that there was about to be a currency reform in the GDR, and hinting broadly that people had better buy as much as they could before their money lost its value. This stunt was aimed, of course, at collapsing the supply system in the GDR and precipitating riots, or uprisings if possible.

Of course, nothing of the kind happened. The trade authorities were able to allocate extra supplies to East Berlin — everything from bananas and pineapples to seamless nylons and Paris model dresses. Notices in the shop windows warned against hoarding — sometimes with a gag; I saw shop windows with huge sacks of flour and sugar and a sign saying that whoever bought more than 500 lbs could get it delivered home free of charge.

The dire RIAS threats about a currency reform backfired. Many GDR citizens, believing these stories, recalled that in a currency reform in 1957 all bank accounts had been unaffected and only cash had been exchanged. Therefore they deposited large amounts of money in the bank, which was of course just what the economy needed, for this money was no longer on the market but could now be used in industrial investment and the like.

By now, there is no longer the slightest remnant of an emergency atmosphere amongst the shoppers, and the signs about hoarding have been taken down.

There is a third difference between the Berlin of a month ago and the city as it is today. Here is what conservative "New York Herald Tribune" columnist Roscoe Drummond admitted on August 25th:

"... the greatest asset West Berlin has been to West Germany, to Western Europe, to the whole free world — that of a resplendent show window in the heart of Communist drabness and dreariness — is almost wholly erased... West Berlin now has only the radius of a flashlight in the fog. It is something, but not very exciting or rewarding to West Berlin, to be a show window only to the convinced, only to those who come to visit from the West... Mr K has already deprived West Berlin of most of its vibrant, loyal raison d'être. Mr Khrushchov has so reduced West Berlin that it is no longer a serious thorn in his flesh, no longer a large bone in his throat."

This show window effect did not only mean fancy goods pumped into West Berlin to impress people from countries trying to build socialism against many odds. It also meant films for the youngsters of East Berlin at special reduced rates. "The Gorilla Strikes", "The Sadist", "Four Pipes of Opium", "Terror in Oklahoma", "The Bride of the Gorilla", "My Revolver Was Quicker", "Revenge of the Black Mask", "Faceless Monster", "Revenge of the Black Spider", "Call-girls", "The Eyes of Terror", "The Eyes of Satan", "Scream of Terror", "Lola the Blonde Devil" — these are some of the 73 similar titles shown in West Berlin theatres in August.

Then there were the "Horror Comics" — millions of them sold to young East Berliners at special reduced rates. Then there were the booklets glorifying the nazi Wehrmacht, and the newspapers plugging revenge against Germany's eastern neighbours and contempt for the people of Asia and Africa. Finally there were the low dives and strip-tease joints.

All these panes in West Berlin's show window are now closed.

Of course, "dreary, drab" East Berlin must learn to find substitutes for all these things. It already has wonderful theatres, lots of concerts and other cultural events, and plenty of sports. But it must teach people corrupted by West Berlin amusements to enjoy such things, and also offer them lots more in the way of amusements, exciting films, dancing and a bit of glamour. Some attempts are being made — from ping pong tournaments to motorcycle treasure hunts. The next months will show how successful they are.

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